

To the Cricklade and Wootton Bassett Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the health and sanitary condition of the Cricklade and Wootton Bassett Rural District for the year 1911.

POPULATION—

The population as shown by the Census taken during the year is 11,004. At the Census taken in 1901 the number was 11,357, a decrease in 10 years of 353.

BIRTHRATE—

There were 316 births registered in the district during 1911 and one birth occurred outside the district, the parents of the child belonging to the district. Of this number 167 were males and 149 females; the birthrate for the whole district calculated per thousand of the gross population is therefore 28·8. Comparing these figures with those of 1910, we have a rise of 156 over the number occurring last year, when the rate per thousand population was 23·79. This is I think a satisfactory state of affairs. The number of illegitimate children born during the year was 7—six males and 1 female as against a total of 18 in 1910.

DEATHRATE—

145 deaths occurred during the year. Of this number 76 were males and 69 females; the rate per thousand population is 12·63. Comparing these figures with those of 1910, which showed 134 deaths with the rate of 12·26 per thousand population, we see that the deathrate remains practically the same. In the Workhouse at Purton 9 deaths occurred, in the County Asylum there were 3 deaths, and in Victoria Hospital, Swindon 2. 73 out of 145 deaths were of persons over 65 years of age. Analysing the causes of death we find that there was 1 death from Diphtheria, 3 persons died from Influenza, 7 from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, 8 from other Tuberculous disease, 10 from malignant disease, 7 from forms of Pneumonia and 11 from Bronchitis. 40 deaths were signed up as due to old age, heart failure, etc. There were 9 violent deaths during the year, but none of these were suicidal.

INFANTILE MORTALITY—

There were 20 deaths of infants under 1 year of age, as compared with 316 births; the rate per thousand births registered is therefore 63·26. This figure is lower than that of last year with an increased number of births. Eight deaths occurred under 1 week of age from prematurity.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES—

I am glad to be able to report a great reduction in the incidence of infectious notifiable disease in the district during 1911. There has been no serious epidemic of any kind notwithstanding the very hot and dry summer.

A. SCARLET FEVER—

Small outbreaks of this disease have occurred in several parts of the district, but the disease has been of an exceedingly mild type and the precautions taken have prevented any serious spread 31 cases were notified.

B. DIPHTHERIA—

An important step has been taken by means of which all medical men in the district now have facilities for the immediate examination (at the expense of the Sanitary Authority) of swabs taken from suspected cases, providing the financial position of the patient is such that they cannot afford to pay for this privately. There have only been three cases of this disease during the past year, but unfortunately a fatality occurred among this small number. All three cases occurred in the Cricklade Sub-Division. The case that proved fatal came into this district from another with the disease already developed. This number compares most favourably with that of previous years and the incidence is lower than it has been since 1902. As an example of the great value derived from the new arrangement made from the examination of material from suspected cases, I would quote the following: A case of Diphtheria occurred at a small cottage at Cricklade and was removed to the hospital. On the return of this child home, when apparently both the child and his brothers and sisters were in perfect health and were ready to return to school, I advised that swabs should be taken from all the children in the house before they were actually allowed to return. It was then found that two of the children—not the one who had actually had the disease—had the diphtheria bacillus present in their throats. Steps were at once taken to further isolate the children, and after a further period at home, and with suitable medical treatment, they were found to be free from the bacillus. We were thus able to prevent what might possibly have been a severe outbreak of the disease among the children of the Cricklade School. I hope, in the course of time, with these facilities for examination, and with the co-operation of the Medical Men in this district, to keep the incidence of the disease, more especially among the school children, at its present low rate, and to absolutely prevent such epidemics as occurred in the years 1903 and 1904.

C. ENTERIC FEVER—

I regret to report that four cases of this disease occurred during the year, fortunately without any fatality. There has been no Typhoid Fever in this district since 1901. The disease occurred in a district of Wootton Bassett the sanitary condition of which particular spot left something to be desired at the time, but which has subsequently been put in order. The cases occurred in September, and if exceptionally stringent and immediate precautions had not been adopted, we should have found ourselves face to face with an alarming spread of this dangerous disease. Bacteriological examination of material from one of the cases some months afterwards showed that we probably had a "carrier" case, and steps were taken, as far as is at present possible, to deal with the public danger which these cases constitute.

D. EPIDEMIC DIARRHŒA—

Following the orders of the Local Government Board, in view of the exceptional summer, and, therefore, probable prevalence of this disease, steps were taken to circularise the district with instructions as to the best means of prevention, treatment, etc., and I am pleased to be able to report that only four deaths from the disease occurred among children.

E. MEASLES.

Only seven cases of this disease were notified during the year.

F. SMALLPOX.

During the early part of the year cases of smallpox occurred in adjoining counties, and measures for the proper supervision of vagrants coming from those parts were discussed, but were not adopted. During the last few years there has been a very grave decrease in the

proportion of the population protected by vaccination from this disease in this district. The number of protected people is still rapidly diminishing; and this is, I think, a cause for most serious disquietude for the future.

The following table gives the number of cases notified during the year, and in the preceding nine years :—

		Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria	Enteric Fever	Erysipelas	Puerperal Fever	Measles
1902	...	55	2	2	6	1	259
1903	...	40	35	3	5	0	21
1904	...	37	56	1	3	2	large number
1905	...	36	17	1	6	0	110
1906	...	7	11	0	3	0	8
1907	...	44	27	0	7	1	105
1908	...	6	7	0	8	0	627
1909	...	2	16	0	2	0	104
1910	...	28	8	0	4	1	99
1911	...	31	3	4	4	1	7

TUBERCULOSIS—

The number of deaths from this disease, at all ages, was 15, of which number seven were from phthisis, in comparison with 10 occurring during the previous year. Only three notifications of the disease were received during the year. During December the new tuberculosis regulations of the Local Government Board were issued, and arrangements were made for the carrying out of these after the 1st day of January of this year.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL—

Only 19 cases were received for treatment in the Hospital during the year, of this number 18 were cases of scarlet fever, and one of diphtheria. All of these were discharged fully recovered. Progress is being made with the erection of a suitable apparatus for disinfection to be carried out on the premises instead of having to forward everything to the Isolation Hospital at Gorse Hill, as is at present necessary. The work at the end of the year is being rapidly pushed on, and the disinfector should be in use soon after the commencement of the present year.

DRAINAGE—

There are only two places in the District where there is a sewerage system—Cricklade and Wootton Bassett—and these have continued to be satisfactorily drained. Under the systematic inspections now being carried out under the Housing and Towning Planning Act, still further steps are being taken to do away with ash pits and vault closets, and I shall soon be able to report that where there is no system of sewerage, the great majority of the closets are of the pail type.

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY—

Notwithstanding the exceptionally dry summer, it is satisfactory to be able to state that the parts of the district where a Public Supply exists, viz. :—Cricklade, Wootton Bassett, Purton, and Purton Stoke—were adequately supplied, although it was found necessary during the course of a few weeks to cut off the supply at night time. Steps have now been taken to ensure a supplemental supply for Purton and Purton Stoke. A number of houses have been connected with a private supply at Lydiard Millicent and a good many houses are also now supplied at Broad Town from the hill above by gravitation.

Section VI. of the Public Health (Water) Act, 1878, is enforced in all cases in the District, and under Section III. of this Act, 26 actions were taken during the past year.

DWELLINGS—

Ten new houses have been erected during the past year, all of good class, and several additions to existing houses have been carried out, making them more suitable for habitation. Work under the Housing and Town Planning Act has been commenced during the year, and inspections have been systematically carried out. 376 Houses have been inspected, and it has been found necessary to serve 122 Statutory Notices under the Act. There were 18 cases of overcrowding, which have been dealt with, and two houses have been condemned as unfit for human habitation.

DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS—

There are 213 of these now registered in the district. As usual, inspections of the premises have been systematically carried out by the Sanitary Inspector and your Medical Officer of Health. Orders as to lime washing, etc., are served twice during the year as a routine practice, and whenever inspection shows that it may be desirable.

BAKEHOUSES AND SLAUGHTER HOUSES—

There are 22 Bakehouses in the district registered, and the inspections carried out show a satisfactory state of affairs. There has been no increase in the number of registered slaughter-houses, which remains at two.

It will be gathered from my report that your Inspector of Nuisances and Medical Officer of Health have had a large increase of work thrown upon them, more especially with regard to work under the Housing and Town Planning Act. They have done their best to cope with this increase and to keep abreast of the requirements of the Act.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION—

Tables 1 to 5, and the Table on the administration of the Factory and Workshops Act, 1901, are enclosed, together with the Report of your Sanitary Inspector.

I am Gentlemen, your obedient Servant,

JOHN N. WATSON,

Medical Officer of Health.